501 396 His constructive skill with wood has been most successfully expressed in the vehicles for land and water transport—the bullock cart and the canoe. The classic pattern for a Burmese boat is the *laung*, built from a single hollowed-out trunk of the *thingan*, a tough tree growing near the water with a girth of 4—20 feet and a height of 15—75 feet. The trunk is hollowed out into a rough hull, the outside is adzed, circles of holes are bored through for a guide, and the shell is hollowed to a uniform thickness. It is then waterlogged, and fired slowly, the symmetry being carefully tended as the hull opens out with the firing. Planks are built up on the sides to increase capacity. These laungs, of a capacity from 10—40 tons, are the universal canoes of the rivers and creeks of Burma. Poled upstream and rowed downstream, they are ideal in the ease with which they can be bumped against rocks or got off shoals, the thingan hull lasting for 20 or 30 years. The bigger boats which still carry rice and other produce up the Irrawaddy are built up from stout ribs on a style which simulates the solid hull of the laung. These boats carry enormous sails and a crew of about fifteen men. Their bulk-heads are richly carved, and they glide along the great Irrawaddy, stately and calm beside the chugging river-steamers, their prows rising and falling like the heads of some fabulous birds.

493 The Burmese cart is a poem in curves of wood. The floor of the cart gives a slight curving sweep from front to back, the sides exaggerate this in crescents that sweep right up into the air, and the circle of the wheel has good balance and strength behind its symmetry. For the sake of the curves, the root wood of cutch and the curved branches of thingan are specially sought out.

326 788 534 Brassware, for which the old centres were at Amarapura and Sagaing in Upper Burma, we were familiar with in bells and gongs. Bells are kept by the Burmese for sacred uses only. The delicate small bells hung high around the spires of pagodas, often of gold and silver, have tongues that are moved by the winds to give a sweet testimony, to all spirits, of the good work of men who built the pagoda and other men who pray below, and give the praying devotee a tinkling reassurance of his merit. The great big bells, however, made of molten copper and tin poured into moulds of clay and wax in pits dug in the earth, have no tongues; but when struck with deer's antlers or a wooden striker they sing a deep note of sweetness. The names given to some famous bells reflect their beauty: *Maha Ganda* (Great Voice), *Mahatti Thadda Ganda* (Great Sweet Sound). All big bells are hung on a cross bar with wooden supports at pagodas, where after recitation of precepts we picked up the striker in turn and struck three times to announce to the spirits

• [552]

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

moment! From start to finish he has all his wits about him, and the stem of the boat is full on the winning-post all the time. Four years ago, when the Hlaing men seemed to be carrying all before them, it was Kya-gyi's generalship that won the day. Therefore the Myanaung magistrate is a little disconcerted at the homage paid him by his old rowing mentor, but none the less he puts on another hundred rupees with a Thônkwa lugyi who comes up at the moment. The Thônkwa men come with a bit of pace just at the finish too, and with a he-la, lu-la, yauk-kya, ba-tha, hé, dash past the winning-post.

This winning-post is not such as is used in English boat-racing. A boat is moored right out in the current with its head to the stream. At right angles to its length a long hollow bamboo stretches across the bows, and through this is passed a rattan, the end projecting an inch or two beyond the mouth of the tube at both sides. The contesting boats have each their own side and keep their own water, and the bow-paddler rises and snatches at this pan as the boat whisks past. It thus becomes a sign and proof of victory and is planted in the bows of the winner. Not a little skill is wanted on the part of both the man at the bow and the man at the stern. The former has to be sure in the eye and quick of hand, and the latter must take especial care to bring the boat past at the proper distance. It is not so very simple a matter to pull out the long cane at the terrific pace with which the boats come up, and the pan must be carried off to ensure the verdict. Sometimes both men seize it at once, and then they are almost certainly swept out of the boat, and as a rule both lose the rattan. Then it is a thaye pwè, a dead heat. But if one has the pluck and presence of mind to stick to it, then his boat has won.

Now the offerings have been made and the boats turned round, no very easy matter in the swift current with their great length. But it is effected dexterously enough. The Myanaung boat paddles up to the winning-post and young Aung Zan tries the pan to see that it runs smoothly in the bamboo, and Ko Kya-gyi swings in the stern of the Thônpânhla—the Three Fair Flowers, as the Thônkwa

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* plays, the doctrine of logical and clear unfolding of plot perishes, for there is no plot to unfold.

536* The decadent dramatists try to appeal not to the mind but to the
152 senses, and naturally we find in their plays glaring attempts at sentimentality and sensationalism. Tears occur often and in great abundance on the slightest excuse. Even in the quite artistic 'Baboon Play', sentimentality is the chief fault, and the hero appears weak and unattractive, for he does nothing but cry, trying to protect his sister not by manly action but by tears. One reason why *Saw-phay and Saw-may* appears so far above other plays of the period is in its freedom from sentimental pathos until the last scene. When the heroine and hero are parted, they cry, but they appear sincere in their sorrow, and the play ends quite happily. In most other plays of the period, the hero and heroine are made to undergo misfortune after misfortune, so as to give them ample opportunity to sing pathetic songs. The sentimentality is heightened by sensationalism, for the more unusual and terrible the suffering of hero or heroine the greater is the pathos. When a queen is executed, she has to be slowly beaten. When a hero is put to death, he has to be trodden on by elephants. When a princess is banished, the orders for her exile have to be announced when she is in travail. For, in the decadent drama, swift and sudden death or misfortune seems out of place, and the agony has to be long drawn out and unusual in order to increase the desired effect. Even in the 'Baboon Play', written by the most learned of the decadent dramatists, we find ample use of blood and horror. The First Part of *Saw-phay and Saw-may* is the one play of the period which is free from horror. In *Tin-tin and Khin-khin*, the last scene where the heroine dies dancing, ill and mad, is typically decadent. Madness, leprosy, incest, and a woman in travail are favourite subjects. Dead bodies are popular, and in one play, a scene occurs where the hero is shown roasting and eating his new-born heir.[1]

536* Comic scenes occur in the decadent plays, as dramatic relief from
552 scenes of horror and pathos. The humour is good humour, and in many ways it is an advance even on U Pon Nya. Lewd references are very rare. There is some satire, but it is without bitterness. All the comic characters are lovable in their own way. The comedy is one of 'humours', and we have admirably drawn portraits of a nagging wife and a cynical bricklaying philosopher in *The History of*

[1] *When Father Ears His Son*, by an unknown author.